

MAINE FARMER

AGRICULTURE MECHANIC ARTS GENERAL INTELLIGENCE

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NO. 49.



OUR HOME, OUR COUNTRY, OUR BROTHER MAN.

Melon Culture.

The communication of our correspondent, Mr. Sylvester, on the culture of squashes, melons, &c., reminds us of a conversation had not long since with our neighbor, Mr. Pliny Harris, on this subject. He stated to us that he one summer had a hill of crookneck squashes on very rich ground. A part of the vine ran upon a low bushy tree. The squashes that grew upon the tree were all "meat and no seeds." When cooked they were found to be of very poor flavor, and indeed not fit to eat, while those that grew upon the ground were of excellent flavor. The cause of this he explained, as follows: The blossoms that produced the squashes upon the tree, hanging down like a bell, were not impregnated by the pollen from the false blossoms, as they were called, neither by being blown into them by the air nor carried in by bees or other insects. How correct Mr. H. is, in this reasoning, we are not able to say.

He also remarked to us that he has observed that the first cucumbers that put out on a vine, generally wither and die. This he thinks is caused by their blossoms appearing before the false blossoms, and are not impregnated with pollen. By taking a false or male blossom from some other vine, and dusting the pollen on the stigma of these first blossoms, you may sometimes succeed in raising a very small cucumber from those that put out first.

Several years since, during a very warm summer, Major Gay, of Gardiner, observing a very thrifty squash vine in his garden, concluded he would try his art in feeding it in order to see how long he could extend it during the season. He accordingly, put earth upon the roots at the joints, and watered it every day with a solution of manure in water. We have forgotten how long said squash vine extended, but it was enormous, growing some days several inches.

We find it quite an object to hurry along the vines of squashes early in the season. They must run not less than two feet before they blossom, and of course they must blossom before they fruit. Vines of this description are pretty coarse feeders, and will use manure with great avidity, and the best way is to give them a good supply of it.

Wages in some parts of England.

The Michigan Farmer has some extracts from a volume of the Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, and among them we find the following statement of wages for farm work in the county of Suffolk, England, which we give our readers. They adopted the custom there, of paying by the piece instead of by the day; which, in most instances, is the best way. We have reduced the currency to our currency near enough for showing the comparison. Mowing hay—forty to fifty cents per acre—twelve full hours' work a day; a good mower accomplishes there one and a half acre. For clover and ryegrass the price is somewhat less.

Mowing, tending and stacking wheat, one dollar twenty cents to one dollar fifty cents per acre. Two men accomplish an acre per day. Reaping wheat, one dollar sixty cents to two dollars forty cents an acre, according to condition. A man is expected to mow two acres of barley and one and three-fourths of oats in twelve hours.

Hoeing and singling out drilled turnips, sixty cents for the first, and fifty cents for the second time. Hoeing wheat, beans, peas and tares, is also common at a little less price.

Ploughing, in Norfolk, with two yokes of oxen, about 25 cents per day, and the man must plough two acres a day. [We suppose this is for holding plough only.]

Digging Ditches—10 to 12 cubic yards of earth, in a day, and removed, the soil not requiring the pick to be used, at 5 or 6 cents per yard. This is not considered fair. A ditch, 5 ft. deep and 6 ft. wide, in a peaty soil, will cost about 25 cents a rod. Filling Farm-yard Manure, at 40 cents a score of loads of 11 cubic yards each; spreading is about the same.

Threshing, with machine, \$8.50 to \$10 per day, including all expenses of cleaning; a day's work, about 100 bushels. Oats and coarse grain, cheaper. Steam threshing machines are now used by some farmers.

Sheep shearing—70 cents to \$1 a score, according to size; a man will shear from twenty to twenty-five in twelve hours. Wages of a common day laborer \$2 per week, without food (board) or house; in harvest 70 cents per day. None of these prices include board or lodging, which the laborer must find for himself; but sometimes he is given.

Our farmers can now draw a comparison between the two locations. In regard to the comparative profits, it must be borne in mind that the produce of the farm brings much higher prices and quicker sales for cash than here.

Subsoiling.

The use of the subsoil plough is gradually extending among us, and when careful experiments have been made with it, the results noted, there has been a good profit arising from its use. We have ever been cautious in recommending farmers to adopt new modes of culture unless there are good reasons for it. This mode of stirring the soil deeply is founded in reason, and we would re-advise farmers, wherever they can consistently with their means, to give it a faithful trial. The additional expense is something, inasmuch as a subsoil plough is needed, and an extra team to follow after the common plough. We extract the following from the Working Farmer, communicated by Mr. James Campbell, of Weston, New Jersey.

He subsoiled every other land in a large field this year, the surface ploughing and manuring

being the same throughout the whole field. He has now gathered his crop, and measured the produce of the subsoiled and unsubsoiled lands separately; the results are, that the subsoiled portions of the field produced at the rate of sixty-nine bushels of shell corn per acre; while the part not subsoiled produced sixty-one and a half bushels per acre. The editor of that paper thinks Mr. Campbell will find the difference in yield much greater the second year than the first, as the subsoil by the free admission of the atmosphere, and the gases held in it, will be rendered more capable of adding to the nutrition of plants. Mr. Campbell remarked that there was not so much difference in the yield, as he had supposed there would be during the summer, for during the dry weather there was great difference in the size, color, and appearance of the stalks in favor of the subsoiled land; but an abundance of rain during the time the corn was filling and ripening, gave the unsubsoiled portions a better opportunity than during drought.

This proves that subsoiled land will stand drought better than unsubsoiled.

THIRD CROP OF PEAS. Mr. Frederick Wingate, of this town, brought into our office, the other day, some peas that had grown two or three inches high, the third crop he had raised this year from the first sowing in the spring. The first crop ripened seed, which were planted and had grown to that size. He will let these winter over.

WOODCUT IRON PLOUGH BEANS. We examined, the other day, a plough with a wrought iron beam, manufactured by Eddy & Co., Union Village, N. Y. It belongs to Mr. Luther Whitman, of Wintthrop. The arrangement seems to possess strength, and was much lighter than we supposed one could be made with that material. We have not seen it work.

Written for the Maine Farmer.

Culture of Melons and similar Vines. Mr. HOLMES.—I have never seen anything in your paper concerning the cultivation of the vines of our farms and gardens, excepting the method of saving them from being destroyed by bugs, worms, &c., when very young.

When the vine has grown about a yard in length, and the fruit appears, crop the vine forward of the fruit, and the fruit will grow and ripen; otherwise it might wither and fall off.

You may observe that near the joint of the vine, under the leaf, there is a curl on the top of the vine, and opposite to this is a spur root which will take to the ground, especially if a handful of earth is put on the vine, the curl and the root. Pursue this course with every branch; for the vine will throw off branches on each side, until it will cover a small yard, if the season was long enough.

I cultivated a vine in this way some years ago, and when the frost killed it, I had seven full grown water-melons upon it, that filled a large basket, and were so heavy that I could not shoulder it. How much they weighed, I never knew.

The present season, my son, who resides in Buckfield, removed a squash plant, (the only one that came up,) to a safer and better cultivated place in the garden. The 20th of June, the leaf was about as large as a cent. It took root and did well; and when the frost killed the vine, there were eight squashes on it, that had come to maturity, and weighed 114 lb. Besides these, there were a great number, probably a hundred of immature ones, which, if they had had one month more to grow in, would have loaded a horse wagon. These were the Marrow squash—a winter variety of fine grain and excellent flavor.

I frequently crop the pumpkin vines in the corn field, when I plant pumpkins with my corn; but I think it is better to plant them by themselves, as the vines are an incubation in the field, and the corn is not so good for them.

HELVY SILVERSTEIN.

Leeds, November 22, 1849.

Written for the Maine Farmer.

Carrots.

Mr. EDITOR.—While journeying through New Hampshire and many towns in Vermont, I saw that the farmers are turning their attention to carrot raising. From sixty to seventy-five bushels can be raised on a patch of 5 rods square.

There is no root culturing which yields so great an amount of valuable properties, per acre, as carrots. Horses as well as cattle, however poor, if healthy, will get fat in a few weeks, on carrots only, without hay or water; in fact they will not drink if you feed them entirely on carrots. One bushel per day, with a little hay, will keep your horses in good working order, without any corn. This has been done during the prevalence of the potato rot.

Farmers in Maine should turn to carrot culture. Carrots are a sure and profitable crop, if well cultivated. They are also good for swine. I fattened a pig wholly on carrots, boiled with a little wheat bran, and when slaughtered at eight months old, he weighed three hundred pounds. Try it.

NOTE. Some of our friends in Maine have succeeded well during the past season with carrots. They are told that a crop equivalent to twelve tons per acre has been raised this summer on the Nason farm in this town. Our correspondent says "no hay," we would say, a little hay, nevertheless.

ED.

Written for the Maine Farmer.

Order of Billed Rata Baga.

Vegetables belonging to the natural order of plants—Cruciferae—are pretty generally characterized as containing in their substance a peculiar ethereal oil abounding in sulphur. The mustard and turnip yield this oil more freely than most others of the order when boiled, and hence give rise to a volatile substance having an odor near to chlorine.

NOTE. Thank you, friend Y., for the explanation. Hence the reason why some of the compounds of sulphur, sulphate of lime, for instance, make good manure for Ruta Baga. Is it not so?

ED.



Poland, or Top-Knot Fowl.

The following account of the exhibition of fowls, and convention of fowl breeders and fanciers, which came off in the Public Gardens, in Boston, on the 15th and 16th of November, we copy from the last number of the New England Farmer. The weather was most delightful, being as bland and bright as the fine weather in May or September.

"The show was extensive both in numbers and variety, far exceeding expectation; and the remarkably fine condition of the fowls was highly creditable to the exhibitors. Those who had taken but a limited observation of this subject, were astonished at the great variety, richness, and excellence of the show; and the many thousands who witnessed it were happily disappointed and highly gratified; and when they saw so many splendid and beautiful fowls, so great a variety possessing peculiar characteristics and marks of distinction, and so large a number of intelligent men giving their attention to this subject, and aiming to improve the various breeds and disseminate useful information on a subject of so much practical utility to all classes, they looked upon this branch of rural economy as assuming great importance, and destined to rank high among the industrial pursuits that contribute largely to the pleasure of the operator, and to the general welfare of the community, and to rural embellishment.

There were about two hundred lots or crops of fowls, and the whole number of fowls was probably about one thousand. Some editors estimated them at two or three thousand; but such are doubtless accustomed to counting votes before election. Almost every breed of fowls in the country was represented, from the beautiful little Bantam, no bigger than a common pigeon, to the majestic India fowls, as large as turkeys.

The greatest deficiency was in the common native hens, which were scarcely seen excepting in crosses. Had the finest natives been selected, they would have added much to the interest and beauty, as well as to the extent of the show. In fowls as in other stock, too much attention is given to foreign breeds, to the neglect of improving the domestic races. Our best natives, judiciously selected and bred by crosses, would rank in utility and show, with the finest foreign varieties.

Besides the numerous distinct breeds at this exhibition, there were crosses and mixtures of almost every description; and for stock, as in everything else, the love of experiment and desire for improvement stimulate Yankees to try every mode, with a view of producing something novel, excellent, or wonderful.

BANTAM FOWLS ON HENS. Bantams. There were various lots of the little Bantams, of different colors, but mostly white. John Giles, Providence, R. I., had African Bantams. E. B. Little, Haverhill; Henry Little, Marshfield; S. H. Peck, Lynn; A. H. Hale, Rockport; S. W. Balch, Dedham; Calvin B. Austin, Danvers; E. B. Richardson, Brookline; H. L. Devereux, Boston; George S. Pierce and Stephen Osborne, Danvers; and A. A. Andrews, Roxbury, exhibited Bantams. Those of Mr. Devereux were white, with top-knots.

Croppers. Parker Barnes, Dorchester, and Henry Little, Marshfield, showed Croppers—an old but excellent race. Mr. B. had his above eggs laid by pullets, which were large for small fowls. He claims for their superior profit, and excellence both in eggs and flesh, in proportion to the food consumed.

Italian, or Black Spanish, were exhibited by Daniel Buxton, Jr., Danvers; A. White, Randolph; Calvin B. Austin, Danvers; B. Shortell and N. Coolidge, North Chelsea; and S. B. Morse, East Boston. Those by Mr. B. were remarkable for their purity, beauty, and distinctness.

Dorkings were exhibited by Dr. E. Wright, Dedham; W. E. Richardson, Brookline; John Giles, W. J. Buckminster, Framingham; Clinton Clark, Brookline; L. H. Stoddard, Brookline; George S. Pierce and Stephen Osborne, Danvers; N. C. Day, Leominster; J. S. Houghton, North Chelsea; A. A. Andrews, Roxbury; Theodore Drew, Plymouth; John W. Hunt, North Bridge-water; N. H. Tyrrell, Easton; T. G. Morrell, Georgetown. The Dorkings, as they were marked, were of various sizes and colors, and many of them were doubtless mixed with other breeds. Dr. Wright's imported Dorkings were much admired.

Belted Greys were shown by Nathan G. Hodson, Stoughton; James Houghton, Dorchester; Joseph A. Stinger, Kingston; John Giles and W. W. Halsey, Roxbury.

Bucks County fowls were exhibited by A. White, East Randolph; and George S. Pierce and Stephen Osborne, Danvers.

Poland Top-Knots were shown by A. White, East Randolph; J. M. Rowell, Manchester; N. H. G. S. Pierce and S. Osborne, Danvers; D. Holmes, Malden; A. H. Hale, Rockport; Theo. Drew, Plymouth; and Joseph A. Sampson, Duxbury.

Guthrie fowls were exhibited by H. L. Devereux, Boston; and S. B. Morse, East Boston.

Java fowls were shown by John Giles, Providence; and John Chamberlain, Jr., Danvers.

English Greys were exhibited by Linus Mastry, Easton; J. G. Floyd, Dorchester; and T. A. Stanley, Attleborough.

Crooks were shown by D. M. Robertson, Manchester; and John W. Hunt, North Bridge-water.

Dominique fowls were exhibited by G. S.

greatest depth of the pond was about seven feet, when they commenced draining.

The mode of draining was by cutting a canal, from three to nine feet deep, with an average width of about ten feet, a distance of 250 rods; by which the water was let off into the ocean. The soil through which this canal was dug, was of the exception of about 18 rods of ledge, was of so boggy a nature that it was found necessary to plank it up while digging the canal, to prevent its caving in until the ground became dry. Around the pond a ditch was dug three miles in length to receive the water from the upland, and carry it off to the canal. The committee find that about 90 acres of the land thus reclaimed, was planted with cranberry vines in the fall of 1847, spring and fall of 1848, and spring of 1849. These vines the present year are in a very thrifty state, bearing cranberries of nearly double the ordinary size. In Massachusetts, the cultivation of cranberries is considered the most lucrative business that can be carried on in the agricultural line, and the committee see no reason why it should not be equally profitable here.

The proprietors have likewise tried the experiment of raising strawberries. Nearly an acre was planted in 1848 with the vines. These vines produced to an extraordinary degree, fruit of a large size, as one of the committee who had been present during their season the present year, was enabled to remark.

Nearly the whole surface of the area drained is underlaid by a bed of peat of superior quality, which the proprietors are about introducing into the market for fuel. This peat soil seems to be an almost inexhaustible source of wealth. It may be further stated that the abundance of excellent manure produced by the action of frost upon the peat, while in its natural state, (before drying,) and the location affords, for gardening, which the location affords, must add to its value.

The committee learn from the proprietors that they have expended in the purchase of these premises and for the mill privilege at the outlet of the pond, and the right of fowling, in erecting furnaces for drying the peat, building pack houses, railroads and purchasing cars, for teams and agricultural implements, in cutting canals and ditches, building fences, transplanting cranberry vines, &c., &c., about \$30,000.

The committee has been thus concise, in their description, from the magnitude of these enterprises, and likewise with the object of encouraging others to similar enterprises, whereby the large sections of bog lands in our State and country may be reclaimed, believing reclaimed bog lands to be the most valuable of any for cultivation.

For this enterprise, the committee award the sum of ten dollars, the amount of the highest premium offered, and a diploma.

The Horse known by his ears.

The size, position, and motion of the ears of a horse are important points. Those rather small than large, placed not too far apart, erect and quick in motion, indicate both breeding and spirit; and if a horse is in the frequent habit of carrying one ear forward and the other backward, and especially if he does so on a journey, he will generally possess both spirit and continuance.

Swains. Noble and beautiful white swans were shown by John Giles.

We have endeavored to show to our readers who had not the pleasure of visiting this exhibition, its variety and extent, and show by the different breeds were exhibited, as a matter of information to purchasers; but where there was so great a variety, and changes made by bringing new lots, and carrying away others, and in short days with crowds constantly around the ponds, and other duties to attend to, it is difficult doing justice to the novel subject.

We hope that the committee will publish a report, in which they will discriminate as to the purity of breeds, and the peculiar properties of each breed, showing its excellencies and defects, and the value of the experienced and intelligent committee, to whom great credit is due for their arrangement and management of this affair, as well as to Dr. Bennett, of Plymouth, for suggesting it. The beginning has been excellent, and remarkably promising, and it has created an excitement that, like that for raising fruit, will have a happy effect on the community. We suppose that arrangements have been made for future shows, and that they will far exceed the recent exhibition. Many sales of farm-fowls were made at the fair, at from five to ten or fifteen dollars per pair. Since the exhibition, blood stock in fowls has risen from fifty to one hundred per cent.

Most credit is due to S. B. Morse, East Boston, the very intelligent secretary of the convention, for the efficient and accurate manner in which he discharged the perplexing duties of his office, and his general care and oversight of the exhibition.

Draining Bogs.

The following statement in reference to draining bogs is copied from the proceedings of the Cumberland County Agricultural Society, in the Eastern Argus.

A statement of Dr. Buzzell & Smith of Cape Elizabeth, in reference to a large extent of bog earth, now that has been reclaimed, and put under cultivation, was handed in, but inadvertently did not reach the committee, until after the premium on clearing bog meadows had been awarded. The statement, in consequence, was referred to a select committee, consisting of Messrs. S. B. Beckett and John Purinton, to be decided upon at their convenience.

The special committee having been so, and examined the premises, report:

That within three years past, Dr. Buzzell & Smith have reclaimed about 320 acres of land, 175 acres of which was recently the bed of a pond, the remaining 55 acres being bog, a great part of which was so saturated with water that it was impossible for a person to pass over it. The

Farmers who set trees last spring had no need of stakes to support them in case proper care was taken to surround the trunks with mulch and earth. Now, this mulch should be buried with the trees through the winter. This surrounding soil may be heaped up and a hill made, like an ancient mound for a hill of potatoes. All this is soon done when the attention is turned to it—a hundred trees may be killed up as soon as a hundred hills of potatoes can be heaped—yet not one farmer in fifty thinks of the thing till the ground is frozen and the snow comes.

If any should be so unlucky as not to see, or heed this advice, till after the ground is covered with snow, let him, as a last resort, tread the snow down close around each tree. This will induce the wind to seek a more soft bed than they can find under snow best down close to the trees. (Mass. Ploughman.)

Take Care of Your Trees.

Winter approaches—your trees must be guarded against snow. What is to be done to keep these little spirits that think they have as good a right to live as animals with two legs? Trees by the wall side are more exposed to mice, than trees in the open fields. If litter or much was put around them in the spring, it should now be all removed or buried up with earth; for as soon as the first snow comes the mice seek a shelter under it, and for want of other food live on the bark of trees. Young trees are their preference—therefore take particular care of young trees.

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THE FLOW AND THE SICKLE.

BY HON. THOMAS BURGESS.

With the Plow and the Sickle, what a conquest is made; What a field from the forest is won! What regions, reduced from the wilderness state, Are now sown in the bosom of the sun.

From the rock where our father is called first to land, Their clearing, from first to last, has opened, And mountains, and plains, by their arms are commanded, Till now on the beach of Pacific they stand.

What a farm for a nation to rejoice in! And gather the wonderful harvest it yields; 'Tis an Empire, reduced to the Sickle and Plow, An empire of gardens, and orchards, and fields.

Half, Nation of Farmers' rejoice in your lot, And about you your harvest is set; Receive the approbation of your hand and soil, But from every foe your triumphs are met.

And He who, by deeds, has now reached a high station, And is called to preside o'er the Commonwealth now, Most reliquish his bow, to save our young nation, As, for Rome, Cincinnatus relinquish his plow.

The Plow and the Sickle shall shine bright in glory, When the Sward and the Scepter shall mingle in rest; And the former shall live, both in song and in story, When warriors and kings are forgotten in dust.

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Black Warts on Plum Trees.

These warts and the curculio are great evils, and the principal ones with which the fruit-grower has to contend in raising plums. They have long been subjects of close investigation to the scientific and practical man, without satisfactory results. The following interesting remarks on the black wart, are from Miss Grace Darling, who had peculiar advantages for observation, in the numerous horticultural experiments of her distinguished father, the late Judge Darling, of New Haven, Ct.

Mr. Cole: I hope you will pardon the liberty I take in writing to you, as I noticed, in your excellent work on fruits, that "no cause had as yet been assigned for the appearance of black knots on plum trees." They seem to have been entirely exterminated from our trees, by cutting off the branches infected, and burning them. I obtained some which contained two kinds of insects, the one a thick, short, whitish little grub, destitute of feet, the other longer and more slender, of a color inclining to a reddish-brown.

I kept them in a tumbler, partly filled with moist earth, and covered with glass. The white grub went into the ground, and in a few weeks came out curculio; the others went into the chrysalis state in and on the excrecences, and hatched out about the same time the curculios did. These proved to be a small moth, about a quarter of an inch in length, of a light brown color, with three large spots of a dark brown on the hind margin, and a line of the same color running across the middle of the wings, pointing backwards, so as to form the letter V. They all died very soon, probably from confinement.

I have examined numbers of the warts, and always found the curculios of the middle most plentiful than the curculio; but why they should both inhabit the same place, and which the author of the mischief is, I am unable to say. I have, however, come to the conclusion that it is the curculio, which makes use of the young and tender twigs in default of plums, from this fact: the moth never seems to have bored for itself, but occupies the cavity left by the curculio; and also in years when the crop of plums has failed, the number of black excrecences have very much increased. In an instance a few years since, when the crop of plums had failed, the warts were literally covered with them, while the buds and more choice varieties escaped.

Respectfully, G. D.

[N. E. Farmer.]

THE FARMER—A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE. The man who stands upon his own soil, who feels that by the laws of the land in which he lives—by the law of civilized nations—he is the rightful and exclusive owner of the land which he tills, by the constitution of our nature, under a wholesome influence, not easily inhibited from any other source. He feels—other things being equal—more strongly than another the character of a man as the lord of the inanimate world. Of this great and wonderful sphere, which, fashioned by the hand of God, and upheld by his power, is rolling through the heavens, a portion is his; he feels from the centre to the sky. It is the space on which the generation before him moved in its round of duties; and he feels himself connected, by a visible link, with those who preceded him, as he is also, to those whom he is to transmit a home. Perhaps his farm has come down to him from his fathers. They have gone to their last home; but he can trace their footsteps over the scenes of his daily labor. The roof which shelters him was reared by those to whom he owes his being. Some interesting domestic, fashioned by the hand of God, and upheld by his power, is rolling through the heavens, a portion is his; he feels from the centre to the sky. It is the space on which the generation before him moved in its round of duties; and he feels himself connected, by a visible link, with those who preceded him, as he is also, to those whom he is to transmit a home. Perhaps his farm has come down to him from his fathers. They have gone to their last home; but he can trace their footsteps over the scenes of his daily labor. The roof which shelters him was reared by those to whom he owes his being. Some interesting domestic, fashioned by the hand of God, and upheld by his power, is rolling through the heavens, a portion is his; he feels from the centre to the sky. 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